College Now Criminal Justice 101: Library Resources

Welcome to the Lloyd Sealy Library! This handout is designed to give you a starting point from where you can begin to do college type research. In these days of high technology the first step almost everyone takes in approaching research is to go to Google and Wikipedia. However in college level study those sources are not recommended. Google searches produce a lot of results to sort through but with no way to know if what its listing is accurate or true. Wikipedia meanwhile can be unreliable especially on controversial subjects. In fact most professors do not allow the use of Wikipedia at all. Rather than relying on these two sources, consider trying out what the library has available to offer you.

Note for College Now students: Since you aren't actually enrolled in John Jay College, you can't check out books or access any of our databases from home. You do have plenty of access to books and other materials while you are in the library though!

Basic Concepts

There are four main concepts that you should keep in mind when starting to do research. They are:

Scholarly materials (also referred to sometimes as peer-reviewed materials) is simply something written and reviewed by scholars to report the results of research and other scholarly activities. An example of scholarly material would be an article from the Journal of American Psychology.

Non-scholarly materials is anything written by non-scholars to report on a variety of topics including news and entertainment. An example of non-scholarly material would be a story from Time Magazine or the New York Times.

Citation is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as "the action of citing or quoting any words or written passage, quotation". In plain English that means that if you use an article or book for your research or quote something that someone else said in your paper then you must list where you got it from. Proper citation is critical to good academic research. At John Jay College a lot of different citation formats are used. If you are not sure how to cite something in your paper then by all means please ask a librarian or take a look at this guide the library has put together on citation: http://guides.lib.jjay.cuny.edu/citing_sources/

Plagiarism is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as "the action or practice of taking someone else's work, idea, etc., and passing it off as one's own". In other words it is stealing and cheating by trying to pass off someone else's idea as something you came up with on your own. To avoid being accused of plagiarism you should make sure to be careful and cite all the sources you use in your paper. For more information on avoiding plagiarism, take a look at the plagiarism section at http://guides.lib.jjay.cuny.edu/citing_sources/

Basic Resources

CUNY+ is the Online Library Catalog for the City University of New York. This is your primary resource for finding books. CUNY+ is set by default to search only the John Jay College collection but students at all branches of CUNY have access to the collections of other CUNY colleges. Inside CUNY+ you will find the call number for the books you are looking for. The call number represents the shelf location of the item in the library's collections.

Databases are where articles, both scholarly and non-scholarly, can be located. There are tons of databases available on every single subject. Databases can be located from the front of the library homepage, both by subject and title.

Academic Search Complete – Also called EBSCOhost, this is our all-in-one database. It covers a little bit of every subject. If you don't know where to start then this is where you should go.

Gale Virtual Reference Library – This is your Wikipedia substitute. This database is basically a collection of Encyclopedias.

Criminal Justice Periodicals Index – A prime source for Criminal Justice articles and other material.

JSTOR – This is a highly popular database that provides nothing but scholarly articles and other materials. Do keep in mind that the articles it offers do tend to be long!

Lexis-Nexis – This is a major legal and newspaper database. If you need materials on laws or court cases this is a database to look at. It's also where you can look if you need any newspaper article dating back to 1980.

SocIndex with Full Text – If a topic you are researching has to do with people, their behavior and society then you are asking a sociology based question and this is one of the main sociology databases available through the library.

Library Subject Guides are pages created by librarians that provide lists of resources to help assist students with their research. They are available at http://guides.lib.jjay.cuny.edu/ . For the class focus on criminal justice, take a look at http://guides.lib.jjay.cuny.edu/criminaljustice. (There are plenty of other criminal justice subject guides available including international criminal justice, prisoner reentry, terrorism, and white collar crime.)

Related links
Library Homepage: http://www.lib.jjay.cuny.edu/
How to use the Library: http://guides.lib.jjay.cuny.edu/LibraryIntro
Criminal Justice Subject Guide: http://guides.lib.jjay.cuny.edu/criminaljustice

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